

Guideline for compensation arrangements for the specific disadvantages in degree programs for disabled and chronically ill students

1. Common definition of disability and legal bases:

“People are considered disabled in case their physical functions, mental abilities and health lag behind by at least six months from those functions typical for the age and appropriate abilities. If their participation in a normal life is thusly threatened, they are legally considered disabled.” (§ 2 para. 1 Sozialgesetzbuch (Social Security Code) IX)
The definition also includes chronic and longer lasting illnesses and chronic illnesses with episodic nature.

The interested party has the **RIGHT** to study non-discriminatorily and equally. The UN Convention on Disability, the Basic Law, the German Higher Education Framework Act and the State Laws for Higher Education regulate the right.

2. Developmental disorders and their effects

Prospective students and students may suffer from various health impairments; some may be visible and others invisible. These impairments include e.g.:

- Chronic bodily diseases
- Dyslexia or dyscalculia
- Restrictions in mobility
- Mental disorders
- Visual, hearing or speaking impaired

For students with no visible impairments, it is especially difficult to demand their right to be compensated for disadvantages.

Due to very different reasons, some students waive their right for applying for compensation (e. g. fear of stigmatization or difficulties in accepting their own disability).

On the other hand, there is to some extent a lack of information on fundamentals and possibilities of disadvantage compensation among both persons concerned and staff members.

Surveys like the 21st Social Survey of the Deutsches Studierendenwerk (State Student Services) reflect the impact of impairments with negative consequences for studies: longer period of study, frequent interruptions and study discontinuations, financial problems etc.

3. What are compensations for disadvantages?

Compensations for disadvantages are a key tool for individually balancing barriers and disabilities and ensuring equal opportunities. Applying for compensation means that there must be health impairment and this impairment must be proven to have negative impacts on the degree program. An ID card for the disabled is not required.

This key tool compensates the precise individual shortcomings of a single person: Compensations allow, for instance, the use of assistive technical devices in examinations or the examination time can be extended, curricula and courses of study can be adjusted, and internships can be rescheduled.

Handicapped students are entitled to the right for compensation of impairments, but they are not entitled to a specific form of compensation.

4. Compensation relating to admission/registration:

Chronically ill or handicapped students can apply for studying part-time. The student must submit a specialized study plan which is to be confirmed in writing by the examination board.

Should the final decision on admission require an aptitude test, the regulations for a simplified processing/handling apply as mentioned in section 5.3.

Enrolment for degree programs with restricted admissions is possible by submitting a hardship application.

5. Compensation in the degree program and for examinations:

5.1 Design principles

→ **Individualization**: adopting the course and exam program according to specific needs of the single students i.e. compensation for precise study-related disadvantages

→ **Creativity** when searching solutions (e. g. adequate study and exam performance)

→ **No relief**: the performance objectives according to the study and examination regulations remain unchanged.

5.2 Modifications in the field of study organization:

A specialized study plan can provide temporal and content-related adjustment. In addition, there is the possibility to study on a part-time basis (Attention: use the financial advisory service) and leave of absence. Furthermore, selected measures can be applied e.g. modification of attendance requirements, facilitated admission to lectures, seminars classes etc. (in case of restrictions on participation or certain admission criteria).

5.3 Modifications in the field of examinations

When the student is not able to take a graded or non-graded examination in the intended time or form, he/she shall have the right to claim compensation according to his/her individual requirements and conditions:

- Extended processing time
- Breaks
- Submitting expected academic performance in another form
- Admission of aids

When calculating **time limits** for

- Taking examinations,
- Sitting failed exams again or
- Sitting passed exams again as attempts at improving grades the time is not counted as an extension of the study period due to disability or chronic illness.

6. Supporting documents

A current medical certificate by a specialist provides evidence of a chronic disease, disability or partial performance disorders; an official medical report by a public health officer is not required. The medical certificate has to explain the effects of the disadvantages on the degree program (see the forms for the medical certificate for applying for compensation).

For being granted the mentioned compensations for disadvantages, the student has to indicate his/her situation as early as possible and submit all necessary documents in good time. This means – except in justified individual cases – that the required verifications have to be submitted regularly and in advance.

7. Application requirements and procedures

The handicapped student must apply for compensation of disadvantages. The application (see also section 6) is to be sent with all necessary documents in writing and as early as possible to the responsible examination board. The decision on measures and steps for compensation of disadvantages is made by the responsible examination board including the party concerned. The examination board sends a written report on the decision to the student.

8. Implementation of exam modifications

As long as and in as so far as claims for compensation of disadvantages exist, the respective student has to apply for the compensation for all examinations and course work in question of one semester. The application has to be submitted to the examination office four weeks before the beginning of the exam registration period at the latest. (see Examination Regulations-General Provisions)

9. Contact

- n.N., Coordinator for the Handicapped
- Irene Peter, Central Studies Advisory Service, deputy commissioner
irene.peter@tu-ilmenau.de
- Dr. Arne Upmeier, university library
arne.upmeier@tu-ilmenau.de
- Examination offices of the Departments
- Ref-soziales@tu-ilmenau.de

10. Further information:

Informations- und Beratungsstelle Studium und Behinderung (IBS) des Deutschen Studentenwerkes (Information and advisory center for study and disability of the German Student Services)

<http://www.studentenwerke.de/behinderung>